

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **Federal Agency Name:** National Sea Grant College Program, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce
- **Funding Opportunity Title:** National Sea Grant College Program Aquatic Invasive Species Research and Outreach
- **Announcement Type:** Initial Announcement
- **Funding Opportunity Number:** OAR-SG-2007-2000770
- **Statutory Authority:** 33 U.S.C. 1121-1131.
- **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:** 11.417, Sea Grant Support.
- **Dates:** Applications must be received by the National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) or the state Sea Grant Program by 4 PM EDT on August 17, 2006 for preliminary proposals and by 4 PM EST on December 19, 2006 for full proposals.
- **Addresses:** Applicants from Sea Grant states must submit applications to their state Sea Grant Program, to the addresses provided by that Program. Consult your state Sea Grant Program for information on addresses A list of Sea Grant states and contact information is provided in section IV.D., Submission Addresses, below.

Applicants not in Sea Grant states may submit proposals to the nearest state Sea Grant Program, in which case they must consult the state Sea Grant Program for information on addresses. Alternatively, applications may be sent directly to the NSGO. If they are sent directly to NSGO, preliminary proposals must be submitted in paper hardcopy, to National Sea Grant Office, Attn: Mrs. Geraldine Taylor, Invasive Species, 1315 East-West Highway, R/SG, Rm 11732, Silver Spring, MD 20910, telephone 301-713-2445. Full proposals must be submitted electronically via <http://grants.gov>, addressing opportunity number OAR-SG-2007-2000770 . Applicants without internet access should consult section IV.D., Submission Addresses, below.
- **Funding Opportunity Description:** The National Sea Grant College Program seeks to fund research and outreach projects addressing the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species. The goal of the program is to discover and develop information and tools that can lead to the prevention, detection and control of aquatic invasive species threatening United States coastal, oceanic and Great Lakes communities, resources and ecosystems.

The opportunity seeks especially to support NOAA-relevant regional research and outreach priorities identified by the Regional Panels of the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force. These are discussed in section I.B., Program Priorities, below.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Program Objective

The Program seeks to fund research and outreach projects addressing the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species. The goal of the program is to discover and develop information and tools that can lead to the prevention, monitoring and control of aquatic invasive species threatening United States coastal, oceanic and Great Lakes communities, resources and ecosystems.

B. Program Priorities

Proposals must be relevant to the National Sea Grant College Program's mission program is to discover and develop information and tools that can lead to the prevention, monitoring and control of aquatic invasive species threatening United States coastal, oceanic and Great Lakes communities, resources and ecosystems. Primary consideration for funding will be given to proposals that address the specific regional priorities listed below.

REGIONAL PRIORITIES.

Based on input from the Regional Panels of the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force, regional invasive species research and outreach priorities for this program have been identified. Subject to appropriations and number and quality of applications received, an attempt will be made to fund at least one project addressing a priority of each of the regions listed below:

(a) Great Lakes Regional Priorities:

Develop a web-based clearinghouse for aquatic invasive species (AIS) Great Lakes outreach programs including program information; formal/informal education and training opportunities and resources; publications. Projects should complement, not duplicate, existing AIS research databases, integrate maintenance, measurable objectives and evaluation and identify programming gaps relative to the I/E priorities of the Great Lakes Panel (www.glc.org/ans/pdf/I-EPriorities4-12-05.pdf).

Research to analyze and forecast potential changes in ballast water sources and AIS risk to the Great Lakes based on projected trends in global trade patterns over the next 20 years; research to profile and characterize the aquatic organisms-in-trade pathways to the Great Lakes and research to assess the risks associated with specific organisms-in-trade identifying high-risk species.

(b) Western Regional Priorities:

Proposals that target non-native aquatic nuisance species (ANS) within the western region are of the utmost priority. Proposals that focus on an ANS whose impacts or potential impacts cover or extend to a large geographic area are preferred. Proposals should address one or more of the following:

- economic and environmental impacts;
- monitoring and rapid response;
- vectors of introduction;
- methods to raise awareness of decision makers; methods to prevent, control and eradicate ANS; and
- education and outreach to pathway groups and the public.

(c) Northeast Regional Priorities:

The Northeast region is concerned about the spread of a marine invasive sea squirt (*Didemnum* sp.) that is found in nearshore, hard surface areas and offshore on cobble areas in Georges Bank, a highly productive fisheries and scallop area. This compound sea squirt can grow over other attached organisms and appears to interfere with bivalve feeding, if not overgrowing species and causing their demise. The species can fragment and regrow into large colonies when conditions are favorable. Throughout the region, it is growing aggressively and spreading quickly.

The organism has not been identified to species and therefore its region of origin, its ecology, and tolerances are largely unknown. There is a need to

- identify the species using molecular probes,
- identify its life cycle and relationship to competitors and predators,
- identify ways to prevent its further spread and to manage and control the species in nearshore and deeper water ecosystems.

The greatest challenge is to limit its spread and manage the species in Georges Bank where it may interfere with the scallop and groundfish productivity and cause even greater economic hardship to the fishing industry.

(d) Mississippi River Basin Regional Priorities:

Barrier Technologies: Develop and test barrier technologies designed to prevent range expansion of Asian carp from large river system (e.g., Illinois River) into the Great Lakes.

(e) Gulf of Mexico/Southeast Atlantic Regional Priorities:

(Outreach) Research to determine the most effective means to change the attitudes and behaviors of people in regards to practices leading to the release or spread of nonindigenous species.

(Research) Investigations into the methodology for predicting range extensions for known invaders based upon their basic life history biology, with particular reference

to the potential effects of natural disasters (hurricanes and floods) and extreme climatic events.

(f) Mid-Atlantic Regional Priorities:

Evaluate existing, and develop new, control options for Mid-Atlantic region priority species, including mute swan, phragmites, purple loosestrife, zebra mussel, nutria, and water chestnut.

Identify AIS and their vectors that pose the greatest risk to the Mid-Atlantic region.

Evaluate ecological, economic, and societal costs incurred by not investing in eradication of a species in the early stage of its invasion. Determine critical factors necessary to evaluate the efficacy of implementing rapid response under different conditions.

Evaluate the effectiveness of control programs implemented by local watershed organizations and NGOs.

Determine if differences exist in invasion success between a healthy, functioning micro-ecosystem and a stressed ecosystem.

C. Program Authority.

Program Authority for the Aquatic Invasive Species Research and Outreach Program is provided by 33 U.S.C. 1121-1131.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. Funding Availability

Depending on the overall funding appropriation for the National Sea Grant College Program, a total of about \$250,000 is anticipated to be available to support invasive species research and outreach projects in 2007. Federal funding will be limited to \$100,000 per project. Projects may be for up to two years duration. It is anticipated that no more than five projects will be funded in 2007. Depending on 2008 appropriations, additional projects submitted to this opportunity may be funded in 2008 without further competition.

B. Project/Award Period

Projects can be for a maximum of two years' duration. Proposed start dates should be no earlier than June 1, 2007.

C. Type of funding instrument

Awards may be made either as grants or, if there is substantial involvement by one or more Federal agencies, as cooperative agreements. Examples of substantial involvement may include collaboration in research, participation in selection of key personnel, or approval of key stages in the project before subsequent steps are undertaken.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Individuals, institutions of higher education, nonprofit organizations, commercial organizations, State, local and Indian tribal governments, foreign governments, and international organizations are eligible. Only those who submit preliminary proposals by the deadline are eligible to submit full proposals.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

Each proposal must include additional non-federal matching funds equivalent to at least 50% of the federal funds requested; for example, a proposal requesting \$100,000 in federal support must include at least an additional \$50,000 in matching funds.

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Address to request Application Package

Application package instructions may vary slightly with the applicant's state. Applicants from Sea Grant states may obtain application information from the Sea Grant Program in their states. The address of Sea Grant College Program Directors may be found on Sea Grant's World Wide Web home page (<http://www.seagrant.noaa.gov/SGDirectors.html>) or may also be obtained by contacting Dorn Carlson listed in the Agency Contacts section.

Applicants not from Sea Grant states may submit their applications to a nearby state Sea Grant program, or directly to the National Sea Grant Office. Full application packages are available through <http://grants.gov> by searching for opportunity number *****. If an applicant does not have internet access, materials may also be requested from Dorn Carlson listed in the Agency Contacts section.

Grants.gov requires applicants to register with the system prior to submitting an application. This registration process can take several weeks, involving multiple steps. In order to allow sufficient time for this process, you should register as soon as you decide you intend to apply, even if you are not yet ready to submit your proposal. More detailed instructions on submitting through grants.gov can be found at the grants.gov homepage, <http://grants.gov>.

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

To prevent the expenditure of effort on proposals that may not be successful, applicants must first submit preliminary proposals. Only those who submit preliminary proposals are eligible to submit full proposals.

1. FORMAT REQUIREMENTS (PRELIMINARY PROPOSALS)

A signed original and two (2) copies of the preliminary proposals must be submitted. The number of pages in the preliminary proposal must be in accordance with the page limitations specified under "Required Elements" (i.e. project description, resumes). All printed pages in the preliminary proposal must be on metric A4 (210mm x 297mm) or 8.5" x 11" paper with at least a

10-point font.

2. CONTENT REQUIREMENTS (PRELIMINARY PROPOSALS)

Preliminary proposals must include the following three elements:

- (a) Signed title page: The title page should be signed by the institutional representative for the organization submitting the application. The title of the project should start with the letters "AISR:" (for Aquatic Invasive Species Research) or "AISO:" (for Aquatic Invasive Species Outreach) as appropriate. The title should then include a brief descriptive title of the project, followed by a hyphen, the letters "PI", and the last name of the Principal Investigator. If the proposal addresses a regional priority outlined in section I.B.1., the title page should include a subtitle based on the this sample format: "A proposal addressing a Great Lakes Regional Priority." The title page should also include the name, affiliation, telephone number, email address and mailing of the Principal Investigator and the institutional representative for the organization submitting the application. It should also include the names and affiliations of all collaborators, the requested Federal funding, and amount and source of matching funds.
- (b) Submit a concise (2-page limit) description of the project, its experimental design, its expected output or products, the anticipated users of the information, and its anticipated impact. Applicants should use the Evaluation Criteria for additional guidance in preparing the preliminary proposals.
- (c) Resumes (1-page limit per Principal Investigator).

3. FORMAT REQUIREMENTS (FULL PROPOSALS)

If submitted in paper hardcopy, a signed original and two (2) copies of the full proposals must be submitted. The number of pages in the full proposal must be in accordance with the page limitations specified under "Required Elements" (i.e. project description, vitae). All printed pages in the full proposal must be on metric A4 (210mm x 297mm) or 8.5" x 11" paper with at least a 10-point font. If submitted electronically, the form available from grants.gov for this competition must be used, and all attached documents must be in a common word processing format that will meet the above format requirements when printed out.

4. CONTENT REQUIREMENTS (FULL PROPOSALS)

Full proposals must include the following elements:

- (a) Signed Title Page: The title page should be signed by the institutional representative. The title should be constructed as described in the preliminary proposal guidance in section 4.B.2.(a), above. If the title of the full proposal differs from the title of the preliminary proposal, the title page should include a statement in parentheses starting "Formerly: ", and giving the title used on the preliminary proposal. The Principal Investigator and institutional representative should be identified by full name, title, organization, telephone number, e-mail address, and mailing address.

(b) Project Summary: This information is very important. It is critical that the project summary accurately describes the research being proposed and conveys all essential elements of the research. Applicants are encouraged to use the Sea Grant Project Summary Form 90-2, available at <http://www.seagrant.noaa.gov/funding/forms.html>, but may use their own form as long as it provides the following information:

(1) Title: Use the exact title as it appears in the rest of the application.

(2) Investigators: List the names and affiliations of each investigator who will significantly contribute to the project; start with the Principal Investigator.

(3) Funding request for each year of the project, including matching funds.

(4) Project Period: Start and completion dates. Proposals should request a start date of June 1, 2007 or later. This section should include the rationale for the project, the scientific or technical objectives and/or hypotheses to be tested, and a brief summary of work to be completed.

(c) Project Description (15-page limit): Brevity will assist reviewers and program staff in dealing effectively with proposals. Therefore, the Project Description may not exceed 15 pages. Tables and visual materials, including charts, graphs, maps, photographs, and other pictorial presentations, are included in the 15-page limitation; literature citations are not included in the 15-page limitation. Conformance to the 15-page limitation will be strictly enforced. The project description should include:

(1) Introduction/Background/Justification: Subjects that the investigator(s) may wish to include in this section are: (i) current state of knowledge; (ii) contributions that the project will make to the particular discipline or subject area; and (iii) contributions that the project will make toward addressing the invasive species issues.

(2) Research or Technical Plan: (i) Objectives to be achieved, hypotheses to be tested, how the objectives relate to Program priorities; (ii) Experimental design and statistical analysis to be used; (iii) Plan of work, discuss how stated project objectives will be achieved, how the success of the project at meeting stated objectives will be measured and reported; and (iv) Role of project personnel.

(3) Outcome: Describe how the project outcome will enhance the Nation's ability to prevent, monitor or control aquatic invasive species. If appropriate, describe how the outcome will affect an identified regional or state invasive species priority. Objective, quantifiable project outcomes should be identified. Describe how the outcomes of the project will be reported.

(4) Coordination with other Program Elements: Describe any coordination with other agency programs or ongoing research efforts. Describe any other proposals that are essential to the success of this proposal.

(5) References and Literature Citations: Should be included, but will not be counted

in the 15-page project description limit.

(d) Budget and Budget Justification: There should be a separate budget for each year of the project as well as a cumulative annual budget for the entire period of the proposed project. Applicants are encouraged to use the Sea Grant Budget Form 90-4, available at <http://www.seagrants.noaa.gov/funding/forms.html>, but may use their own form as long as it provides the needed information. Subcontracts, if any, should have a separate budget page. Matching funds equivalent to 50 percent of the federal funds must be indicated. Each annual budget should include a separate budget justification page that itemizes all budget items in sufficient detail to enable reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of the funding requested.

Please provide details and justifications for travel, supply or equipment items in the proposed budget. The total dollar amount of indirect costs must not exceed the negotiated indirect cost rate and approved by the cognizant federal agency prior to the proposed effective date of the award or 100 percent of the total proposed direct costs dollar amount in the application, whichever is less.

(e) Current and Pending Support: Applicants must provide information on all current and pending federal support for ongoing projects and proposals, including subsequent funding in the case of continuing grants. The number of person-months per year to be devoted to the projects must be stated, regardless of source of support. Similar information must be provided for all proposals already submitted or submitted concurrently to other possible Federal sponsors, including those within NOAA.

(f) Vitae (2-page maximum per investigator)

(g) Appendices:

APPENDIX A - RESEARCH PROTOCOL. Research activities funded under this program must not cause or accelerate the spread of aquatic nuisance species to non-infested watersheds. Therefore, if the proposed project involves the transport or use of living organisms that are not already established at the site of the project, the proposal must describe the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) Plan or other Research Protocol that will be used to assure that these organisms are not intentionally or accidentally released to the environment in a viable state. Applicants are encouraged to examine the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) process for evaluating and managing the risk of accidental release of organisms. Examples of HACCP Plans can be found at <http://www.haccp-nrm.org/>. An alternative protocol for evaluating and managing risk of invasive species release during research activities was developed by the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task force and is available at http://www.anstaskforce.gov/Documents/PROTOCOL_FOR_EVALUATING.pdf. Either model is acceptable. Research or outreach proposals that do not involve the transport or use of living organisms do not need to provide this appendix, but the application should include a statement describing why this appendix isn't needed.

APPENDIX B - LETTERS OF SUPPORT (optional).

APPENDIX C - INDIRECT COST AGREEMENT negotiated with the Federal government.

No other appendices are permitted

(h) Standard forms. Applications submitted through grants.gov will include several mandatory electronic standard forms. Applicants without internet access who plan to submit an application in hardcopy will need to submit hardcopy equivalents. Please seek guidance from those listed in section IV.A., Address to request Application Package, above.

C. Submission Dates and Times

1. PRELIMINARY PROPOSALS

All applicants have the same preliminary proposal deadlines, regardless of where the applications are submitted. Preliminary proposals must be received by the appropriate address by 4 PM EDT on August 17, 2006. Applications will be date and time stamped upon receipt.

2. FULL PROPOSALS

All applicants have the same full proposal deadlines, regardless of where the applications are submitted. Applications must be received by the appropriate address by 4 PM EST on December 19, 2006. Submissions through grants.gov will have a date and time indicator on them. Hard copies applications will be date and time stamped upon receipt.

3. EXCEPTIONS

Hard copy applications arriving after the above deadlines will be accepted for review only if the applicant can document that the application was provided to a delivery service that guaranteed delivery prior to the specified closing date and time. In any event, in order to assure sufficient time to give all applications a fair review, applications received by the appropriate address later than three business days following the deadlines will not be accepted.

4. FORWARDING OF APPLICATION MATERIALS

Preliminary proposals received by state Sea Grant Programs must be forwarded by the Sea Grant Program to the National Office by August 24, 2006. Full proposals received by state Sea Grant Programs must be forwarded by the Sea Grant Program to the National Office via grants.gov by January 18, 2007.

D. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under this Program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs."

E. Funding Restrictions

None.

F. Other Submission Requirements

SUBMISSION ADDRESSES

Applicants from Sea Grant states must submit applications to their state Sea Grant Program, to the addresses provided by that Program. Consult your state Sea Grant Program for information on addresses. The address of Sea Grant College Program Directors may be found at:

<http://www.seagrants.noaa.gov/SGDirectors.html> or may also be obtained by contacting Dorn Carlson listed in the Agency Contacts section. Sea Grant states are: Alabama; Alaska; California; Connecticut; Delaware; Florida; Georgia; Hawaii; Illinois; Indiana; Louisiana; Maine; Maryland; Massachusetts; Michigan; Minnesota; Mississippi; New York; New Hampshire; New Jersey; North Carolina; Ohio; Oregon; Pennsylvania; Puerto Rico; Rhode Island; South Carolina; Texas; Vermont; Virginia; Washington; Wisconsin. More information and internet links to state Sea Grant Programs can be found at: <http://www.seagrants.noaa.gov/colleges/textlinks.html>.

Applicants not from Sea Grant states may submit proposals to the nearest state Sea Grant Program, in which case they must consult your state Sea Grant Program or the full Federal Funding Opportunity for information on addresses.

Alternatively, applications may be sent directly to the NSGO. If they are sent directly to NSGO, preliminary proposals must be submitted in paper hardcopy, to National Sea Grant Office, Attn: Mrs. Geraldine Taylor, Invasive Species, 1315 East-West Highway, R/SG, Rm 11732, Silver Spring, MD 20910, telephone 301-713-2445. Full proposals must be submitted electronically, via <http://grants.gov>, addressing opportunity number *********. If an applicant does not have internet access, full applications may be sent in hardcopy (one signed original and two copies) to the address given above for preliminary proposals. Include a cover letter stating that you are submitting in hardcopy because you do not have internet access.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

A. Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria for both preliminary proposals and full proposals are as follows:

1. IMPORTANCE AND/OR RELEVANCE AND APPLICABILITY --This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities. For this competition, this includes the degree to which the proposed activities are necessary to the goals of the program, the degree to which the potential users of the results have been involved in the planning of the activity, and the degree to which the activity, if successful, will advance the state of the art, science, or industry.

2. TECHNICAL/SCIENTIFIC MERIT--This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives.

3. OVERALL QUALIFICATIONS OF APPLICANTS--This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and

administrative resources to accomplish the project.

4. PROJECT COST--This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame. This includes the degree to which inter-institutional and multi-disciplinary programs have been developed in order to leverage funds and resources.

5. OUTREACH AND EDUCATION-- This criterion assesses whether the project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources. For this competition, this includes the degree to which the potential users of the results will be involved in the execution of the activity, the quality of the plan to disseminate the results of the activity to appropriate user groups and the public, whether the project includes ways to assess the effectiveness of proposed activity.

B. Evaluation Criteria Weights

The evaluation criteria are weighted differently, depending on whether a research or an outreach activity is proposed.

1. RESEARCH PROPOSAL WEIGHTS

- (a) Importance and/or relevance and applicability (35%).
- (b) Technical/Scientific Merit (35%).
- (c) Overall qualifications of applicants (10%).
- (d) Project cost (10%).
- (e) Outreach and Education (10%).

2. OUTREACH PROPOSAL WEIGHTS

- (a) Importance and/or relevance and applicability (35%).
- (b) Technical/Scientific Merit (10%).
- (c) Overall qualifications of applicants (10%).
- (d) Project cost (10%).
- (e) Outreach and Education (35%).

C. Review and Selection Process

An initial administrative review is conducted at both the preliminary and full proposal stages to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application.

Preliminary proposals will be subject by peer review by independent government, academic, and industry representatives. Reviewers will provide individual evaluations of each proposal. The reviewers will provide no consensus advice to the Program Officer.

The Program Officer will consider these evaluations in determining which applicants will be encouraged to submit full proposals. Regardless of whether they are encouraged to submit full proposals, all applicants who submitted preliminary proposals in compliance with the deadlines and other requirements of this announcement are eligible to submit full proposals.

Full proposals will be evaluated by an independent review panel consisting of experts in the field from government, academia, and the private sector, who will evaluate each proposal in accordance with the above evaluation criteria and their assigned weights. Panel members will provide individual evaluations of each proposal, and their ratings will be used to produce a rank order of the proposals. The review panel will provide no consensus advice to the Program Officer.

The Program Officer will consider these evaluations when recommending to the Selecting Official which applications should be selected for award.

D. Selection Factors

The selecting official shall award in rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon the following factors:

1. Availability of funding
2. Balance/distribution of funds
 - (a) Geographically
 - (b) By type of institutions
 - (c) By type of partners
 - (d) By research areas
 - (e) By project types
3. Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA/federal agencies
4. Program priorities and policy factors as set out in Section I.B.
5. Applicant's prior award performance
6. Partnerships with/Participation of targeted group
7. Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a NEPA determination and

draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the Grants Officer.

E. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, awards for successful applications are expected to be made by June 1, 2007. The proposed start date should be no earlier than this date.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Award Notices

Successful applicants will receive notification that the application has been recommended for funding to the NOAA Grants Management Division. This notification is not an authorization to begin performance of the project. Official notification of funding, signed by the NOAA Grants Officer, is the authorizing document that allows the project to begin. Notification will be issued to the Authorizing Official and the Principle Investigator of the project either electronically or in hard copy. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their proposal was not selected for recommendation.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. **DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE PRE-AWARD NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS** - Administrative and national policy requirements for all Department of Commerce awards are contained in the Department of Commerce Pre- Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of December 30, 2004 (69 FR 78389). A copy of the notice may be obtained at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/search.html>.

2. **LIMITATION OF LIABILITY** - In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs if these programs fail to receive funding or are cancelled because of other agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

3. **NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA)** - NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/>, including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216--6--TOC.pdf>, and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, http://ceq.eh.doe.gov/nepa/regs/ceq/toc_ceq.htm. Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their program activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems).

In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required

impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting of an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. The failure to do so shall be grounds for not selecting an application. In some cases if additional information is required after an application is selected, funds can be withheld by the Grants Officer under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to make an assessment on any impacts that a project may have on the environment.

Administrative and national policy requirements for all Department of Commerce awards are contained in the Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements published in the Federal Register on October 1, 2001 (66 FR 49917), as amended by the Federal Register notice published on October 30, 2002 (67 FR 66109). You may obtain a copy of these notices by contacting the agency contact(s) under Section VII, or by going to the website at: http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/aces140.html.

3. Reporting

Award recipients will be required to submit financial and performance (technical) reports. These reports are to be submitted electronically unless the recipient does not have Internet access, in which case hard copy submissions will be accepted. All hard copy financial reports shall be submitted in triplicate (one and two copies) to the NOAA Grants Officer.

VII. AGENCY CONTACT(S)

Dorn Carlson, NOAA R/SG, National Sea Grant Office, 1315 East-West Highway, Rm 11839, Silver Spring, MD 20910, telephone 301-713-2435; via internet at invasive.species@noaa.gov.